

Bellingham Bay Portfields Project

“Revitalizing a Maritime Community”



Project Background

The Port of Bellingham, located in the northwest corner of Washington State, is one of three communities that have been selected nationally for targeting under a new federal initiative, known as “Portfields.” The Portfields program is designed to:

- **Revitalize waterfront areas and improve marine transportation systems** in order to meet growth projections for marine trade and address border security, and
- **Restore coastal resources**, including environmental, economic, and social systems.

The federal Portfields initiative is being led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), with support from many other federal agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Corps of Engineers, the Economic Development Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Maritime Administration. Locally, the Bellingham Bay Portfields Project is being led by the Port of Bellingham.

Bellingham’s Progress

The Port has taken a lead role in three local initiatives over the past three years in response to dramatic changes in the waterfront economy. Recent mill closures, cleanup of historic industrial contamination, statewide salmon recovery efforts, and homeland security for a border community have demanded an energetic commitment to lead the community through this transition period. The Portfields Initiative is consistent with the Port of Bellingham’s ongoing lead role in:

- The Bellingham Bay Demonstration Pilot – a partnership with state and federal agencies, local communities, and native tribes to clean up historic contamination and restore marine habitat.
- The Partnership for a Sustainable Economy – a cooperative effort between the Port of Bellingham and local communities to develop a new blueprint for a sustainable, healthy and diversified economy which recognizes the importance of environmental and social factors.
- The Waterfront Futures Group – a task force of community and industry working to create a new, compelling vision for the waterfront focused on the waterfront “character,” economic development, and environmental improvement.

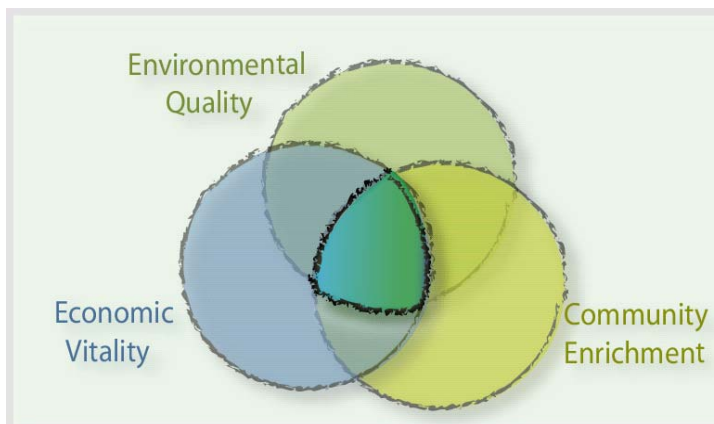
Making the Bellingham Bay Portfields Project Successful

Many projects consistent with the Portfields initiative are already underway, and the federal government, acting through the Corps, NOAA, EPA, and the US Coast Guard has already invested considerable effort to help bring Bellingham to a high level of readiness to build for the future. To build on this readiness and continue progress towards achieving the Port’s goals of **Economic Vitality, Environmental Quality, and Community Enrichment**, the Port is seeking to engage agencies and resources for a broad range of actions, including:

- Feasibility evaluation for a waterfront stewardship institute
- Design and construction of transportation infrastructure
- Reauthorization to minimize dredging requirements in federal channels
- Guidance for establishing a federal facility for enhanced border security
- Remediation of contaminated marine sediments
- Restoration of estuarine habitat for ESA-listed salmon
- Acquisition and redevelopment of surplus industrial property

Bellingham's New Model

The Port of Bellingham has launched their new model for waterfront revitalization to move Bellingham and Whatcom County into the future. Our model combines the three principles of Economic Vitality, Environmental Quality, and Community Enrichment. The principle of **Environmental Quality** restores and enhances the natural environment of the area through environmental cleanup and habitat restoration. The principle of **Economic Vitality** provides sustainable employment and economic prosperity for the Port and the Region by leveraging public fund and partnerships with industry to create permanent high-value jobs. The principle of **Community Enrichment** increases quality-of-life through cultural, recreational, and new security enhancements. The Port is committed to achieving these goals through consortiums of community, tribal, federal, state, and industry representatives.



Example Projects

Squalicum Channel Restoration

Economic Vitality – Provides long term economic stability and job creation and retention through improved cargo berthing, increased land-use efficiency, and Pacific Rim Trade expansion



Environmental Quality – Supports recovery of ESA-listed salmon through restoration of estuarine functions and provides additional high-quality nearshore habitat.

Community Enrichment – Creates new waterfront parks, connects existing walking trails, restores shoreline, and provides for public water access, using a plan developed with multiple resource agencies, tribes and community stakeholders.

Coast Guard Station Expansion

Economic Vitality – Supports the important Homeland Security role of the Coast Guard with an excellent physical location near the U.S. Border and shipping lanes, and provides direct and indirect economic benefits for the community

Environmental Quality – Remediates contamination from historical industrial activity and constructs the expanded facility using sustainable development practices

Community Enrichment – Cooperative planning process and central location build link between Homeland Security Agency and our border community

